

Health and Society: Medicine and the Movies

Honors Seminar, Fall 2004

Tuesday 1:30-4:10

Professor Golden

Office: Armitage Hall, 4th Floor

Office Hours: Office Hours: Tues, 12:30-1:20, Wed, 4:00-5:00

Class Meets: Robeson 203

Overview:

This course looks at the history of American medicine, at Americans' experiences of illness and at the way both doctors and patients have been portrayed in Hollywood films. We discuss epidemic and endemic diseases, mental illness, chronic ailments, and physical disabilities. We look at the effects of disease on individuals and on communities. Additionally, we examine the hospital, clinic, and HMO and the development of the healing professions (including orthodox and alternative medicine, nursing and midwifery) and ask how they have been portrayed over the course of the twentieth century. A critical component of the course is the evolution of public health measures and legal debates over their consequences.

A seminar differs from other classes in that it is a collective experience that requires a sense of intellectual community. Our goal is to develop an open and continuing conversation about health and society in the United States and about how popular media contribute to our perceptions of science, caregiving, and patienthood. Success in achieving that goal depends upon the participation of everyone. For this reason, regular attendance and participation are crucial. I will be calling on students to lead portions of the discussion.

Please keep in mind that your grade is based on four things: attendance and class participation, a midterm, a final, and weekly assignments in response to the assigned readings and films. The writing assignments consist of a short summary and response to the assigned reading (approximately 1-2 pages) and three class discussion questions for that reading as well as a short summary and response to the film (1/2 page). We will review the requirements for the weekly assignments in class.

Grading:

Attendance and Class Participation	20%
Midterm	15%
Weekly Writing Assignments	50%
Final Exam	15%

Required Reading:

Ann Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*

Laurie Kaye Abraham, *Mama Might Be Better Off Dead*

Alan Kraut, *Silent Travelers: Germs, Genes and the "Immigrant Menace"*

James Jones, *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment*

Jay Neubeboren, *Imagining Robert: My Brother, Madness and Survival: A Memoir*

Reading Packet from Atul Gawande *Complications*

Theme 1: The Culture of Biomedicine

Sept. 7: Introduction

Film: "Frankenstein"

Sept. 14: Medicine as a Profession

Reading: *The Spirit Catches You*, preface, pp. 1-105

Film: "Internes Can't Take Money"

Due: Response to *The Spirit Catches You* and discussion questions.

Sept. 21: Faith in Science

Reading: *The Spirit Catches You*, pp. 106-209

Film: "Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet"

Due: Response to *The Spirit Catches You* and discussion questions and response to "Internes Can't Take Money"

Sept. 28: Doctors and Patients

Reading: *The Spirit Catches You*, pp. 210-287

Reading: Reading Packet: Introduction, The Computer and the Hernia Factory

Film: "Elephant Man"

Due: Response to *The Spirit Catches You*, "The Computer and the Hernia Factory" discussion questions and response to "Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet"

Theme 2: Madness and Civilization

Oct. 5: What is Madness?

Reading: *Imagining Robert*, pp. 3-69, 131-170;

Film: "Snake Pit"

Due: Response to *Imagining Robert*, discussion questions and response to "Elephant Man"

Oct. 12: Treating Mental Illness

Reading: *Imagining Robert*, pp. 171-313

Film: "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest"

Due: Response to *Imagining Robert*, discussion questions and response to "Snake Pit"

Theme 3: Disease and Society

Oct 19: Health, Communities, and Healing

Reading: *Silent Travelers*, pp. 1-9; 31-135

Film: "Last Angry Man"

Due: Response to *Silent Travelers*, discussion questions, and response to "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest"

Oct. 26: Hospitals and Health

Reading: *Silent Travelers*, pp. 136-165, 226-272

Film: "Hospital"

Due: Response to *Silent Travelers*, discussion questions, and response to "Last Angry Man"

Nov. 2: **Midterm**

This will be an in-class essay exam. Study questions for the exam will be handed out before the exam

Theme 4: Race and Medicine

Nov 9: Battling epidemics

Reading: *Bad Blood*, pp. 1-112

Film: Arrowsmith

Due: Response to *Bad Blood*, discussion questions and response to "The Hospital"

Nov 16: Racism and Medicine

Reading: *Bad Blood*, pp. 113-205

Reading: The Man Who Couldn't Stop Eating

Film: "No Way Out"

Due: Response to *Bad Blood*, response to "The Man Who Couldn't Stop Eating," discussion questions and response to "Arrowsmith"

Nov 23: Modern Epidemics

Reading: *Bad Blood*, pp. 206-241

Reading: Whose Body Is It Anyway? and The Case of the Red Leg

Film: "Philadelphia"

Due: Response to *Bad Blood*, response to "Whose Body Is It," response to "The Case of the Red Leg" discussion questions and response to "No Way Out"

Theme 5: Medicine and Money

Nov 30: Getting Older

Reading: *Mama Might Be Better Off Dead*, pp. 1-133

Due: Response to *Mama Might*, discussion questions, response to "Philadelphia"

Final Exam Review

Dec 7: Dying in a Culture of Biomedicine

Reading: *Mama Might Be Better Off Dead*, pp. 134-259

Film: "Dr. Solomon's Dilemma"

Due: Response to *Mama Might*, discussion questions,

Dec. 17: **Final Exam**

This will be an in-class essay exam covering the second half of the course. Study questions will be handed out in advance